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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0306

May 15, 2003

Dear Colleague:

Wildfires are inevitable in our forests. It is not a question of "If," but a question of "When?"

But fires in our forests do not have to destroy entire communities, watersheds, forest habitat and endangered species. Such catastrophic fires are unnatural, and often claim homes and, worse, human lives. In contrast, well-managed forests can withstand fire. In fact, forests that have been preventively treated to reduce hazardous fuel loads actually benefit from periodic fires. These fires create forest openings for new growth, provide a variety of wildlife habitat, and reduce fuel buildup.

The Rodeo-Chediski fire that burned through my district in June 2002 was absolutely devastating. This out of control fire raged across the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, burning some 469,000 acres. The fire grew to 15 acres in the first 13 minutes of its life, and continued to expand at a rate of 1¼ acres/minute.

The picture below shows treated and untreated areas where the fire burned. On the reverse are pictures that show the intensity of the Rodeo-Chediski fire. This catastrophic fire demonstrated once again that forest management tools such as prescribed burns and forest thinning are important elements to maintaining healthy forests.

As the House prepares to debate **H.R. 1904, the Healthy Forests Restoration Act**, I hope you will keep these images in mind. Support the bill, and make a **vote for the environment, for wildlife, for rural communities, and for healthier forest habitat.**

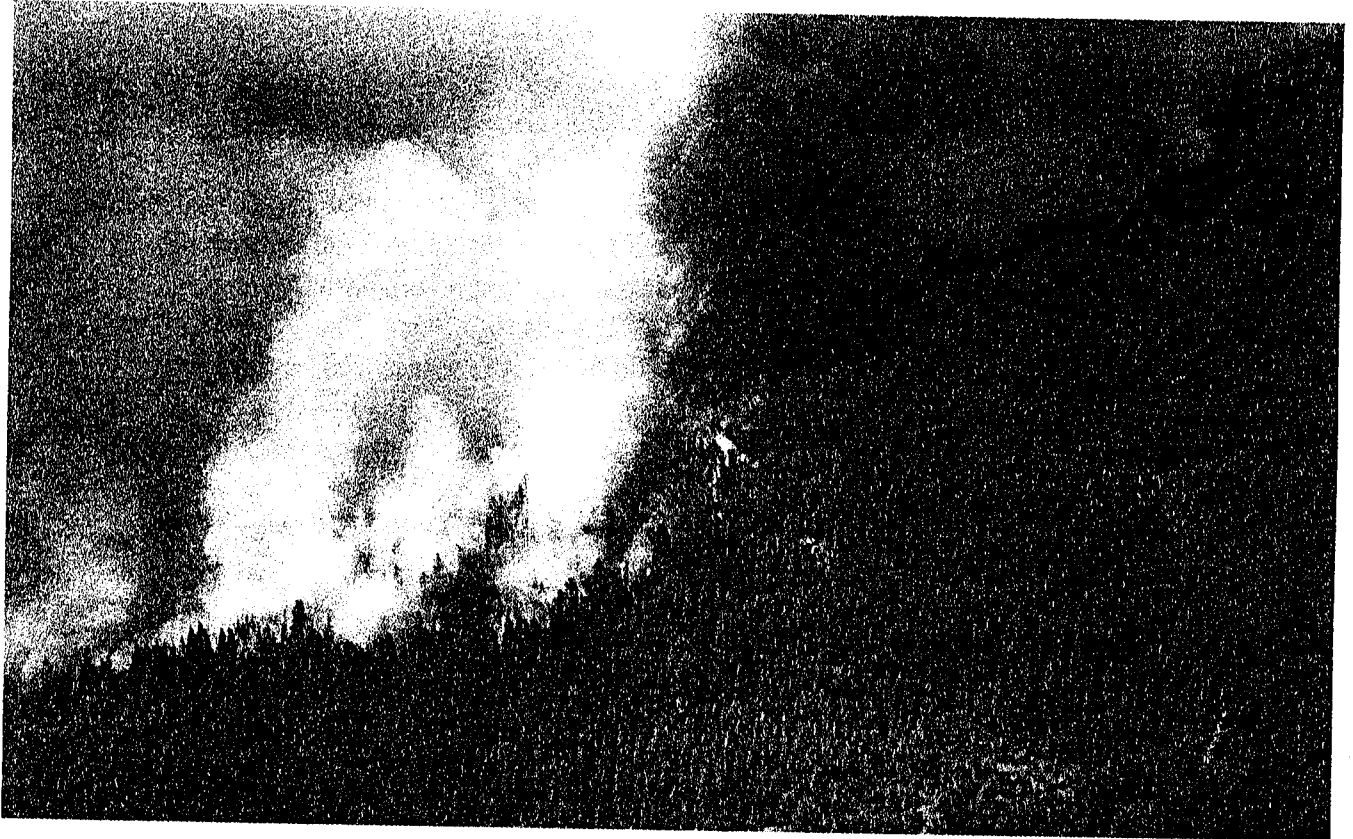
Sincerely,

J.D. Hayworth
Member of Congress



VOTE YES FOR HEALTHY FOREST!

Carrizo Canyon, June 19, 2002 10:30 AM



By 3:50pm flame lengths reach nearly 1,000 feet.

